

# Agricultural Land Preservation Program

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

The County's Agricultural Land Preservation Capital Program is administered by the Montgomery County Department of Economic Development. The program includes one ongoing capital project, Agricultural Land Preservation Easements, whose objective is to protect and preserve agricultural land from development with the goal of retaining a significant farming sector throughout Montgomery County.

The County's goal is to protect 70,000 acres by 2012. Through June 30, 2005 it has permanently preserved 64,998 acres for agricultural use, which is more than any other county in the nation. Currently, preservation of agricultural land is accomplished under five separate agricultural land preservation programs: the Montgomery County Agricultural Easement Program (AEP); the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF); Montgomery County's local Transferable Development Rights (TDR); the Maryland Environmental Trust (MET); and the Montgomery County Rural Legacy Program (RLP). The acres preserved under each program are displayed in the chart below, and each program is described in the narrative that follows.

	MALPF	AEP	MET	RLP	TDR	TOTAL
Acres to be Protected - Goal	4,523	7,919	2,086	4,948	50,524	70,000
Acres Protected Thru FY05	3,594	6,799	2,086	3,935	48,584	64,998
Acres Needed to Reach Goal	929	1,120	0	1,013	1,940	5,002

Through AEP, the County purchases easements on farmland using Agricultural Transfer Tax collections to meet acreage acquisition targets. Agricultural easements acquired through the AEP may range in value from \$1,700 to \$6,000 per acre, depending on location, land quality, and amount of road frontage. The County has protected 6,799 acres through the AEP.

Through MALPF, the State purchases development rights easements directly from landowners to protect agricultural land from development. Since 1980, 3,594 acres have been protected.

Montgomery County's local Transferable Development Rights (TDR) program, established by the functional Master Plan for the Preservation of Agriculture and Rural Open Space, accounts for the major portion of the County's preserved land – 48,584 acres. The program, administered by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC), allows Upcounty landowners to transfer development rights from the 93,000-acre Agricultural Reserve, in the western and northern portions of the County, at the rate

of one TDR per five acres, to developers with projects in areas that can accept the higher development density, designated as "TDR receiving areas."

The MET program encourages landowners to donate an easement on their property to protect scenic open areas, including farm and forest land, wildlife habitats, waterfront, unique or rare areas, and historic sites. This program is associated with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and requires no monetary participation by the County. Montgomery County has protected 2,086 acres through the MET program.

The RLP was enacted in 1997 as part of the Governor's Smart Growth and Neighborhood Conservation initiative to protect natural resources. The program is designed to protect areas rich in multiple agricultural, forestry, natural and cultural resources in order to protect resource-based economic development, protect green areas, and maintain rural life. Montgomery County acts as a conduit for these funds, and no monetary participation is required of the County. The County has protected 3,935 acres through the RLP program.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Initiate a new Building Lot Termination (BLT) program in FY07 that targets individual lots where development is permitted. To launch the program, the County will purchase the "Super TDRs" retained on these lots, preserving them in perpetuity.

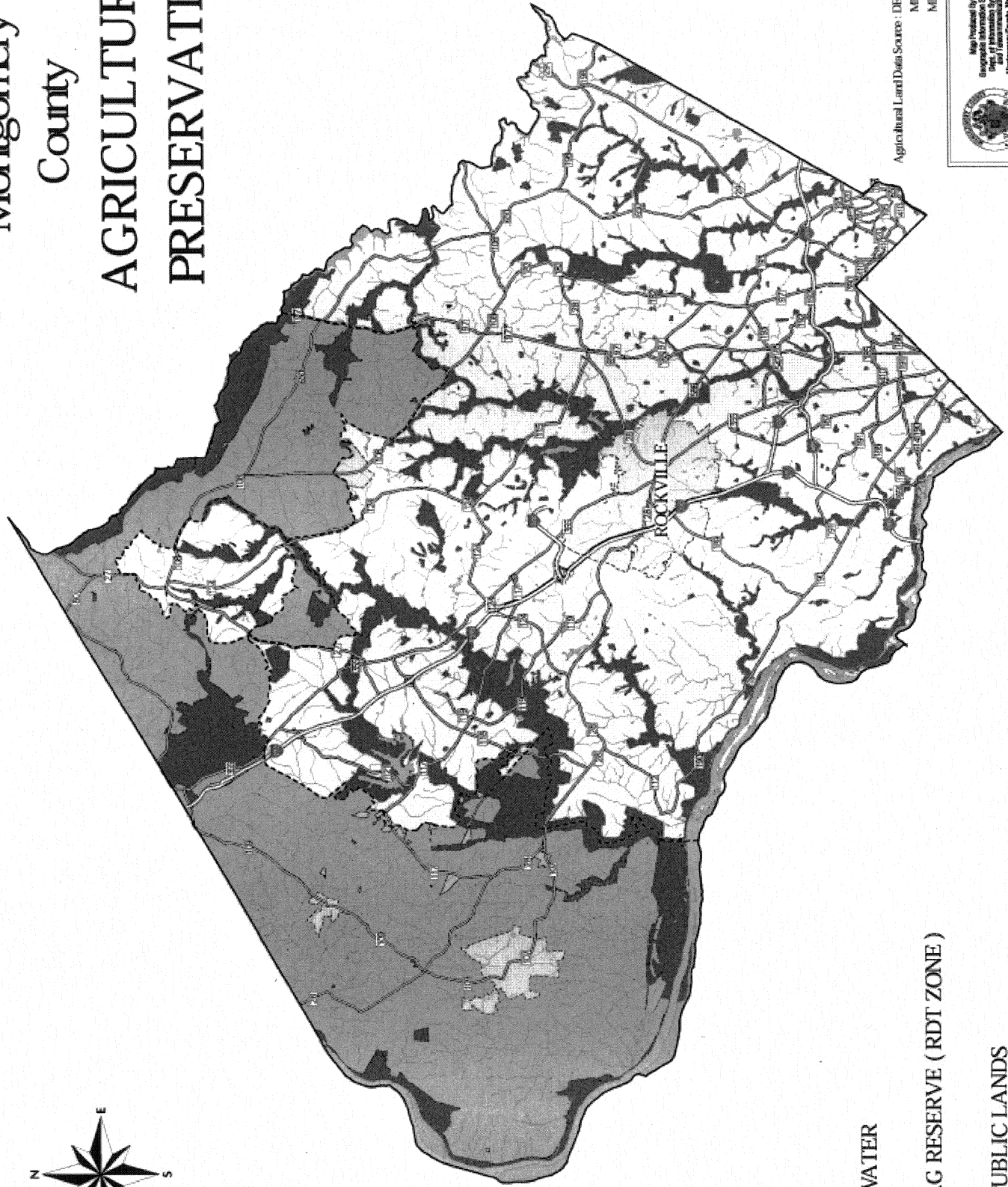
## PROGRAM CONTACTS




Contact Jeremy Criss of the Department of Economic Development at 301.590.2823 or Doug Weisburger of the Office of Management and Budget at 240.777.2762 for more information regarding this capital budget.

## CAPITAL PROGRAM REVIEW

The Executive's recommended FY07-12 program expenditure total of \$24.4 million represents a \$5.3 million or 27.9 percent increase from the amended six-year total. This increase is primarily attributable to the new BLT program, funded by Agricultural Transfer Tax collections. Total six year program funding includes Rural Legacy Program funds (State aid), Agricultural Transfer Tax contributions, and investment income.

# Montgomery County AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION



-  WATER
-  AG RESERVE (RDT ZONE)
-  PUBLIC LANDS

Agricultural Land Data Source: DED Agricultural Services  
MNCPL& PC  
MD Office of Planning



Map Produced By:  
Geographic Information Systems  
Dept. of Information Systems  
and Telecommunications  
Montgomery County, Maryland  
Date: September 11, 1998

